



Protection and Rehabilitation
of Water and Forest Resources of the Prefecture of Rhodope

The natural and cultural wealth of the Rhodope Prefecture



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The Rhodope Prefecture at a glance

Located in the north-east of Greece, in the heart of Thrace, the Rhodope Prefecture comprises a natural and man-made environment of great significance.

In the northern part, the eastern Rhodope Mountain Range defines the borders between the Prefecture and Bulgaria. In the central and southern parts, life-giving rivers, outlining the rural landscape, traverse the extended valley, with its fertile fields and meadows. In the southern part of the Prefecture, the coastal zone and a wetland complex, with lakes, lagoons and estuaries, compose ecosystems of great and internationally recognized values.

Archaeological sites and monuments accentuate the importance of the area and bear witness to its rich history. The cultural wealth of the Prefecture is complemented by deserted villages in the beautiful lush surroundings of Mount Papikion, the customs and traditions of the inhabitants, the graphic Pomac villages, the mosaic of people (Christians, Muslims, repatriates from the former Soviet Union and economic migrants), the town of Komotini with its harmonious blend of opposites and the daily routine of a deeply “cultured” place.



An invaluable ecological wealth

The Rhodope mountain range is one of the most interesting areas of Europe, mainly because of its great diversity, due to its geographic location, geological composition and terrain. The fact that glaciers did not affect it has made it a refuge for many species of Central and Northern Europe, for which Rhodope marks the southern limit of their distribution.

The cluster of wetlands in the south of the Prefecture, as well as the multitude of rivers and streams that traverse it, are also of high ecological importance, as they feature a varied vegetation and are home to many animal species.

Today, many natural areas in the Prefecture are protected at a national, European and international level.



Forests

Although in the past it has suffered from bad planning and misguided interventions, the vegetation of the Rhodope Prefecture has largely remained natural.

Walking up in the Rhodope Mountains, three main forest vegetation zones succeed one another.

The **Mediterranean zone** of evergreen broadleaf plants spreads over the lower altitudes, featuring species such as strawberry trees and Greek strawberry trees, phillyrea, Kermes oak, wild olive trees etc. In the past, this zone underwent extensive reforestation, using Turkish pine. Today, having fulfilled their main role, these trees have been naturally enriched with other species, mainly oak, and are used for aesthetic and recreational purposes.

The **oak forest** zone starts from 200-300 m and spreads up to approximately 1.000 m. Dominated mainly by Hungarian oak, sessile oak and occasionally the downy oak, the oak forests of Rhodope have been more or less degraded.

The **beech zone** appears at higher altitudes, where it occupies a relatively small area. The beech forests, usually mixed with oak and in some places with hybrid fir, are degraded; however, they also feature some productive stands capable of producing timber wood.

To the southeast of the Prefecture, on Mount Ismaros in the Petrota area, a place of special interest is the **dwarf black pine forest**, which covers an area of approximately 100 ha. Its trees, which rarely exceed 1 m in height, look like “bonsai” trees.

This phenomenon is unique, not only for the country but also for Europe. The reasons why these trees grow up only to that height are little known. Probably they are related to the nature of the rock and the soil properties.



Riparian vegetation grows along the rivers Lissos (or Fil-iouris), Kompsatos, Vosvozis and nearby streams, and around the estuary of the Vosvozis River into Ismarida (Mitrikou) Lake. Whether in the form of clusters of limited size, or in the form of forests, this vegetation is composed of willows, sycamores, alders, poplars, and ash and elm trees.





Caves

Southeast of the Prefecture and just 3 km north of the settlement of Maroneia, is the **cave of Maroneia**, also known as the cave of the Cyclops, where, according to legend, Odysseus blinded the Cyclop Polyphemus. Excavations in the cave have indicated it has been occupied from prehistoric to byzantine times. It features halls, corridors and small ponds. The impressive stalactites and stalagmites, the bats living inside, along with its archaeological value, make it a place of special interest.

One kilometre southeast of the settlement of Strymi, in the Maroneia-Sapes municipality, you will find the **Strymi caves**, perched on the rocky slopes of the Ismaros Gorge, also known as *In-Dere*. Archaeological findings suggest that these caves had been used as places of residence by the Neolithic people of the area.



Wetlands

The rich hydrographic network is composed of numerous wetlands of various types and sizes, with particular importance for the local population and biodiversity. The Lissos and Kompsatos rivers that run through the eastern and western parts of the Prefecture respectively are the largest rivers in the area. Their estuaries in Vistonida and Ismarida lakes, and the shallow lagoons along the coast, compose an important wetland complex, designated as a Wetland of International Importance, as a National Park and as part of the NATURA Network of protected areas.

Featuring a wide variety of habitats, the wetlands of the Rhodope Prefecture are home to a rich birdlife throughout the year, commercial and non-commercial fish species, as well as many other animals and plants.



Lake Ismarida and the lagoons of Rhodope

Small and shallow, Ismarida, the only fresh water lake in Thrace, is located 18 km south of Komotini town, towards the settlement of Neo Sidirochori, and 3 km north of Anoiktos Bay. It occupies a surface close to 340 ha, while its maximum depth does not exceed 1.5 m. A source of life for the rural population of the neighbouring settlements, it is used for irrigation and less for fishery.



> The plants...

Ismarida Lake hosts a considerable number of plants; the aquatic, forest and meadow plants exceed 220 species. Water lilies, water chestnuts, pondweed, water lentils and other aquatic plants grow in its waters. The open waters are surrounded in some places by very dense local reed and thicket beds, a valuable breeding habitat for birds, fish and amphibians. The reeds hide saltwater and freshwater marshes and halophilus scrubs. On the north side of the lake, at the mouth of Vosvozis River, stands a small grove of riparian willow, poplar, alder, and elm and ash trees, unique in the region.



Very close to each other, the lagoons of Rhodope Prefecture stretch west of Ismarida Lake and are in direct contact with the sea. The Elos, Ptelea, Alyki (Mesi), Arogi (Karatza) and Xirolimni (Fanari) lagoons are surrounded by extensive salt marshes. In the small zone that separates them from the sea, the sandy or saline soil is covered by a mosaic of vegetation, which, depending on the season, displays a different shade. Saltworts dominate, which for many months have a deep brick red colour. The same plant grows around the lagoons in the form of a ring. Rushes grow mostly in places that are often flooded by rainwater. Over 160 species of birds have been recorded in the lagoons. More than 300 Dalmatian pelicans spend the winter here, while many more are observed during the migration season. In winter, swans, geese, ducks, herons, cormorants, gulls and other species flee from the harsh winter weather of Scandinavia or Russia and flock to the lagoons to feed and rest until early February, when they begin their return to the northern regions to breed.

> ...and its animals

With 233 bird species, 118 of which nest in the area, Ismarida Lake is distinguished by its rich bird fauna. Among other things, it is one of a few Greek wetlands where the Northern lapwing, the savi's warbler, the sedge warbler and the common reed bunting nest. It also retains one the last colonies of spoonbills in Greece, while in the last few decades, a large number of flamingos have been observed (3,300 birds, one the largest populations in the country).



Lake Vistonida and its lagoons

To the west of the Prefecture, Vistonida Lake is shared by both the prefectures of Xanthi and Rhodope. With an area of 4.500 ha and a depth ranging from 2 to 3.5 m, it constitutes an extension of the Bay of Porto Lagos and is separated from the sea by a narrow strip of land. South of the lake lies the Porto Lagos Lagoon, which is connected through a natural channel to the sea and through three mouths to the lake. The wetland cluster is complemented by the lagoons west of Vistonida Lake (the largest are Lafri and Lafrouda), which functionally connect the area with the Nestos Delta.

Lake Vistonida is characterized by a unique phenomenon in Greece. Its northern part is filled with fresh water, as it receives inputs mainly from the Kosynthos, Kompsatos and Travos rivers. On the other hand, its southern part that receives seawater from the three mouths connecting it to the Porto Lagos Lagoon is brackish, with salinity varying depending on the movement of water masses between the lake and the lagoon.

Today, the lake supports the local economy, as many fish species are caught in its waters, while its ecological importance renders it a pole of attraction for visitors.



> The plants...

On the banks of the Kosynthos and Kompsatos rivers that flow into the lake, willows, sycamores, alders, poplars, ash and elm trees grow abundantly. The northern and southern banks of the lake are surrounded by extensive reed beds and saltwort, as well as by periodically submerged marshes of saltwater and freshwater. Near the village of Lagos there are two small pine forests, one of which is home to a large colony of herons.



> ...and its animals

In Vistonida Lake, the silent world of fish numbers about 20 species. But there are also many sea species that enter from the mouth connecting it to the sea, bringing the total to nearly 40 species. Carp, rudd, roach, the Black Sea chub, as well as the endemic Aegean gudgeon and strumica loach, live in the fresh waters. On the other hand, water eel, bass, mullet, bream, sole and sand steenbras live in the brackish waters. Since 1991, the Big-scale sand smelt reproduces in the lake, while the Thracian shad that is endemic to the lake seems to have disappeared, probably because the waters have become saltier.

The waters of the lake and the surrounding areas of lush vegetation are also home to amphibians (great crested newt, marsh frogs, tree frogs, agile frogs, pilovates, bobbins, green toads) and reptiles (terrestrial and aquatic turtles, water snakes, four-lined snakes, ratsnakes, vipers, European green lizards, etc.), not to mention remarkable aquatic mammals such as otters.

Moreover, in Vistonida Lake, the colourful world of birds is evident and impressive; 264 birds are found here. In addition to the herons of Porto Lagos, purple spoonbills, avocets and the black-winged stilt breed in the area. In recent years, a growing population of flamingos has been feeding and reproducing, while thousands of gulls, herons, storks, glossy ibis, as well as hundreds of raptors, make a stop in the region during their migration.

During migration you will also see a large numbers of White pelicans, while you will notice Dalmatian pelicans throughout the year, as Vistonida Lake is, together with Lake Kerkini, the most important wintering site for the species in Europe and the Mediterranean.



Because names matter...

Lake Ismarida is also known as "Mitrikou": from the Turkish word "*Anakioi*" = *Anne-köy* which means "the mother of the village = the life-giver of the village", a name that reflects the recognition of its value as a source of life by the local residents, who until today call it "Mana" (mother).

Lake Vistonida owes its name to one of the many Thracian ancient tribes, the Vistons, which lived round the lake and had as king, Diomedes, known from the feats of Hercules. During the Ottoman occupation, Vistonida was called *Bourou*, a name that is still used today by the locals and is connected to the fortress of *Bourou* that existed on its northern bank.



The value of nature in ...numbers



The significance of the natural wealth of the area has been recognized at national, European and international level with the declaration of protected areas under different protection schemes.

Thus, the Rhodope Prefecture numbers:

1 Wetland of International Importance. Named “The Vistonida, Porto Lagos and Ismarida lakes and the neighbouring lagoons”, it occupies 24.400 ha and is shared by both the Xanthi and Rhodope prefectures.

1 National Park. The “National Park of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace” occupies 72.000 ha and extends from the Nestos Delta in the Xanthi Prefecture up to Lake Ismarida and the lagoons of the Rhodope Prefecture. It is managed by the Nestos Delta - Vistonida - Ismarida Management Body.

4 Sites of Community Importance for habitats, plants and animals of the NATURA 2000 Network. These are:

> **GR1130006 “Filiouris River”.** Located to the east of the Prefecture, it includes part of the river. Enclosed in the plain, the river springs from the eastern part of Mount Rhodope and flows into the Thracian Sea, east of Ismarida Lake. It hosts important animals, including the endemic fish Vistonis She-maja (*Alburnus vistonicus*).



> **GR1130007 “Kompsatos River”.** Located west of the Prefecture, it includes part of the river. Enclosed in the plain, Kompsatos River springs from the western mountains of the Prefecture and feeds Lake Vistonida. It hosts important fauna, such as endemic, rare and endangered species (e.g. the fish Vistonis Shemaja), birds (e.g. the white-headed duck), amphibians and reptiles.

> **GR1130008 “Maroneia-Cave”.** It is an important shelter for different species of bats.

> **GR1130009 “Lakes and Lagoons of Thrace and the Wider and Coastal Region”.** It includes some of the most important wetlands of Greece (Vistonida and Ismarida lakes, five shallow lagoons, part of Filiouris River).

3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds. These are:

> **GR1130010 “Vistonida and Ismarida Lakes - Porto Lagos, Alyki, Ptelea, Xirolimni, Karatzas Lagoons.”** About 56% of the area is located in the Rhodope Prefecture and the rest in the Xanthi Prefecture.

> **GR1130011 “Filiouris Valley”.** It is located in the northeast of the Prefecture, in the eastern part of the Rhodope mountain range. It is particularly important for rare and endangered birds that breed there, like the Egyptian vulture (the smallest

vulture of Greece) and the short-toed snake eagle.

> **GR1130012 “Kompsatos Valley”.** The area is particularly important for rare and endangered birds, such as the Syrian woodpecker, the semi-collared flycatcher and the Ortolan Bunting.

16 Wildlife Refugees. These are natural areas of particular importance, either as places of growth of wild flora or as breeding, feeding and wintering habitats of wildlife, or as fish reproduction and spawning areas. One of them (*Kallithea-Three Fountains*) is shared by the Rhodopi and Evros prefectures.





A place full of history



Located at the crossroads of maritime and land routes linking Greece with the East, the Aegean Sea with the Black Sea, Asia with Europe, the Rhodope region has been a strategically important part of the wider area of Thrace since prehistoric times.

Human activity during the Palaeolithic era (10.000-7.000 BC) is revealed by findings such as stone tools made of flint that were found in the **Petrota prehistoric flint quarry**. Excavations in **Paradimi** and the **Maroneia Cave** have shed light on the Neolithic period (5.800-3.000 BC) and on the effects of large fortified settlements in the North Aegean (Lesvos, Limnos, Troy) during the Bronze Age (3.000-1.100/1.050 BC).

In the mountainous areas of Rhodope and Ismaros, findings indicate that Thracian tribes had settled in the area since the 11th century BC, a representative example of which is the **Acropolis of Ergani**, near Xylagani. Remains of settlements, fortified walls, cemeteries and outdoor temples testify to the remarkable culture and martial skill of the Kikonae, the residents of **Homeric Ismara**, located on today's Mount Agios Georgios in Maroneia.

During the colonization of the Ionian coast of Thrace in the 7th century BC, great cities were founded, such as **Dikaia**, **Strymi**, and **Maroneia**. After the Persian wars, the powerful kingdom of Odrysian was founded (480-460 BC), later occupied by the campaigns of Philip II (353-350 and 342-339 BC). The strong influence of the Macedonians in the region is seen in monuments like the **Macedonian Tomb of Symbola**.

The Roman period marks the establishment of new cities, and the growth of the old. This is mostly due to the famous **Via Egnatia**, parts of which were discovered east of ancient **Anastasioupolis** in the region of Kopteros, and to the east, after Iasmos. It extended towards **Maximianoupolis** and **Koumoutzina** (today's Komotini town), and crossed the plains to Sapes. Traces of this road have also been discovered in the region of the Roditis settlement.



During the Byzantine period, new cities were established on the sites of older ones and their names were changed (**Anastasioupolis-Peritheorion**, **Maximianoupolis-Mosynoupolis**), while others, such as Maroneia, continued to prosper while retaining their names.

Mount Papikion in mountainous Rhodope developed into an important monastic centre of Byzantium. Organized along the lines of Mount Athos, it flourished between the 11th and 12th centuries.

With the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the Ottomans settled in the lowlands. New cities were founded; others grew like Komotini, while others declined such as Maroneia. The inhabitants of mountainous Rhodope established settlements near the ruins of the monasteries, taking advantage of abandoned farms. Such settlements, now uninhabited, are **Linos**, **Geneti**, **Poa**, **Kerasia**, **Folia** and **Vronti**.

Thrace was actively involved in the liberation struggle. After many years of Turkish occupation, it fell under Bulgarian control (1912) and remained a place of conflict until its re-integration to Greece (1920). Under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the Turkish Muslims were excluded from the population exchange between Greece and Turkey, and remained in the area.





Tour suggestions



...along the coast of the Prefecture

On the narrow strip of land separating **Lake Vistonida** from the sea, the **bridge of Porto Lagos** (= lake port), with the **church of Agios Nikolaos**, marks the boundary between the prefectures of Xanthi and Rhodope and is an ideal starting point to visit the Prefecture. Following the old road from Xanthi to Komotini, the colourful world of birds around Lake Vistonida indicates the ecological importance of the area. At the junction towards **Fanari** village, one may see the **traditional settlement of Sarakatsani**, where each year the "Kalogiannia" is celebrated, an event dedicated to the birth of St. John the Baptist.

The archaeological site of **Ancient Dikaia** is on the road to Fanari, on top of a low hill overlooking Lake Vistonida and the coast of the Thracian Sea. The city, founded in the 6th century BC by Ionian settlers, was a trading post and a centre of agricultural production. The untapped tourist resort of **Fanari** provides recreational opportunities, with small hotels, camping facilities and fish taverns by the sea.

From Fanari, the provincial road continues east to **Neo Sidirochori**. The settlement, one of the Prefecture's main villages, is an ideal gateway to **Lake Ismarida**, the **peninsula of Molyvoti** and the adjacent **lagoons**. The peninsula of Molyvoti features the remains of **ancient Strymi**, an influential ancient city founded in the 7th century BC by settlers from Thassos Island.

From Neo Sidirochori, you can easily reach **Xylagani** and from there continue on the road to **Maroneia**, one of the most important archaeological sites in Thrace and a significant tourist destination today. En route you will encounter an imposing hill on which is erected the prehistoric **acropolis of Ergani** (accessible through a path that starts from the same-named settlement). On your way, don't miss a stop at the **Cave of the Cyclop Polyphemus** (Maroneia), 3 km north of the settlement, where works are underway.

The archaeological site of **Maroneia** is a destination of exceptional interest. The city was founded in the 7th century BC by colonists from Chios Island and became an important centre of commerce and navigation that prospered in the centuries that followed.



The fortification of the city stretches from the beach to the summit of Mount Ismaros. Byzantine Maroneia occupies a smaller area, limited around the ancient port. The signs will lead you either south to Agios Charalambos and the picturesque harbour, to explore the coastal part of the ancient and byzantine city, or north to visit very important monuments, such as the theatre of Maroneia.

Continue southeast to explore the **Petrota** region and **Strymi**. West of the settlement of Petrota is the unique-in-Europe **dwarf black pine forest**, while the cavities of the volcanic rocks in the area are home to a **striking millstone quarry**.

In the rock, you can distinguish incomplete efforts to extract millstones, while lots of grindstones are scattered in the forest. Northwest of Petrota, between the settlements of Strymi and Dionis, the rocky slopes of the In-Dere gorge of Ismaros feature caves of special archaeological value, known as the **Caves of Strymi**.



While exploring the coast, be sure to swim or just relax on the beaches of Fanari, Arogi, Mesi, Glyfada, Molyvoti, Imeros, Prophitis Ilias, Proskinites, Alkiona, Platanitis, Maroneia, Marmaritsa, and Petrota.



... in the town of Komotini

Capital of the Prefecture, administrative centre and seat of the Democritus University of Thrace, the town of Komotini boasts a special cultural mosaic.

Its history begins from the small settlement that was built on the site of the current city as a station on the Via Egnatia and was fortified in the 4th century AD, to become the Byzantine town of “*Koumoutzina*”. The quadrilateral **fortress**, in the heart of the city, is one of its oldest monuments. Outside its eastern wall is **Imaret**, one of the oldest monuments of Ottoman Thrace (now restored, it serves as Ecclesiastical Museum of the Holy Metropolis of Maroneia and Komotini).

The most notable buildings of Komotini include two of its oldest mosques, **Eski Mosque** and 16th century **Yeni Mosque**. Attached to Yeni Mosque is the **Clock Tower**, built in 1884 and a landmark of the city. The **Metropolitan Church of the Assumption of the Virgin** dominates also in the centre of Komotini, and is a fine example of a wooden-roofed basilica of the 19th century.





The mansions, scattered in the different streets and points of the town, intensify its particular character and compose a fragmented but representative picture of its life and prosperous years from the middle 19th century up to the beginning of the 20th century.

Many of these newly-renovated buildings house infrastructures and services of modern life, such as the Tsanakleios School, the Tsanaklis mansion, the Peidis residence, the Malliopoulos mansion, the Skouteris residence, the Stalios residence considered one of the most beautiful mansions of Thrace, and many others.

...on mountainous Rhodope

East of Komotini →

Starting from Komotini, follow the road to **Roditis**, to reach **Gratini** through the sign-posted junction at the start of the road. The settlement owes its name to Byzantine “Gratsianou”, a major Thracian centre during the 14th century. Remains of the castle are preserved north of the modern settlement, on top of a pine-studded hill with a panoramic view of the valley. Continue north of Gratini to **Paterma**.

The road is paved up till the settlement of **Iampoli**, while from there a decent dirt road and a mountain trail begin among oaks and scrub vegetation. The route then continues beyond Paterna along the same-named river, whose banks are connected by one of the region's stone arched bridges.

Returning to the Komotini-Roditis road, head southeast to reach **Arisvi**, where another stone arched bridge joins the banks of the river Lissos, ending up in **Sapes**, the region's shopping centre. Continue northeast to **Nea Santa** and **Kechros** to reach the **Pomac villages**, such as Chloe, Myrtiski, Vyrini and Organi, and to explore the forests of Rhodope.





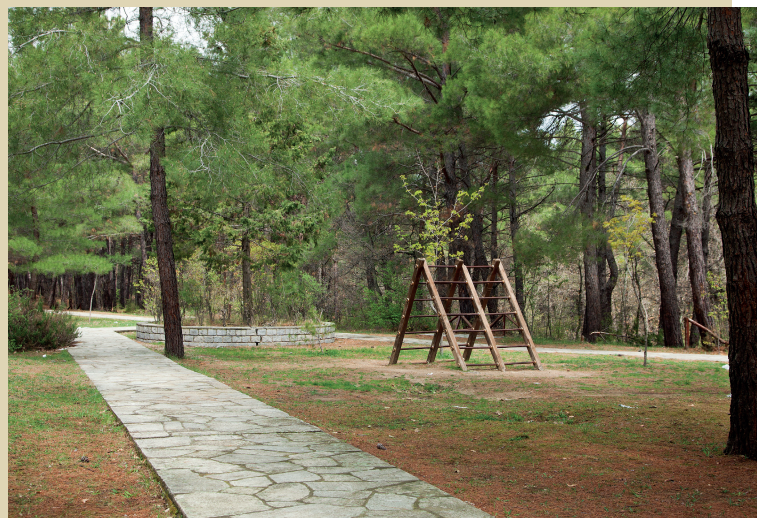
North of Komotini →

Follow the northern road network to visit **Pandrosos** and mountainous **Nymfaia**, a traditional stone village. The beautiful trail, lined with oaks, offers panoramic views of the valley and the Thracian Sea.

Equally interesting is the route to the **Fort of Nymfaia**, the last eastern stronghold of the Metaxas line of Greek resistance in World War II. Immediately outside the town, you will find the **organized suburban forest of Komotini**, an ideal recreational spot. Don't miss a stop at the municipal tourist kiosk, opposite of which stand the ruins of a Byzantine castle, built to control the natural passage between the valleys of Philippoupolis and Komotini.

The route, which is lined with oak and pine trees and then at higher altitudes with beech trees, continues either to the **Shelter of the Mountaineering Association of Komotini** "Charalambous Dimos", found at 1,050 m of altitude, or to the **Fort of Nymfaia**, on the borders with Bulgaria.

If you head towards **Symvola**, 7 km north of Komotini town, you should definitely visit one of the **Macedonian tombs** of Thrace, about 800 meters north of the settlement.



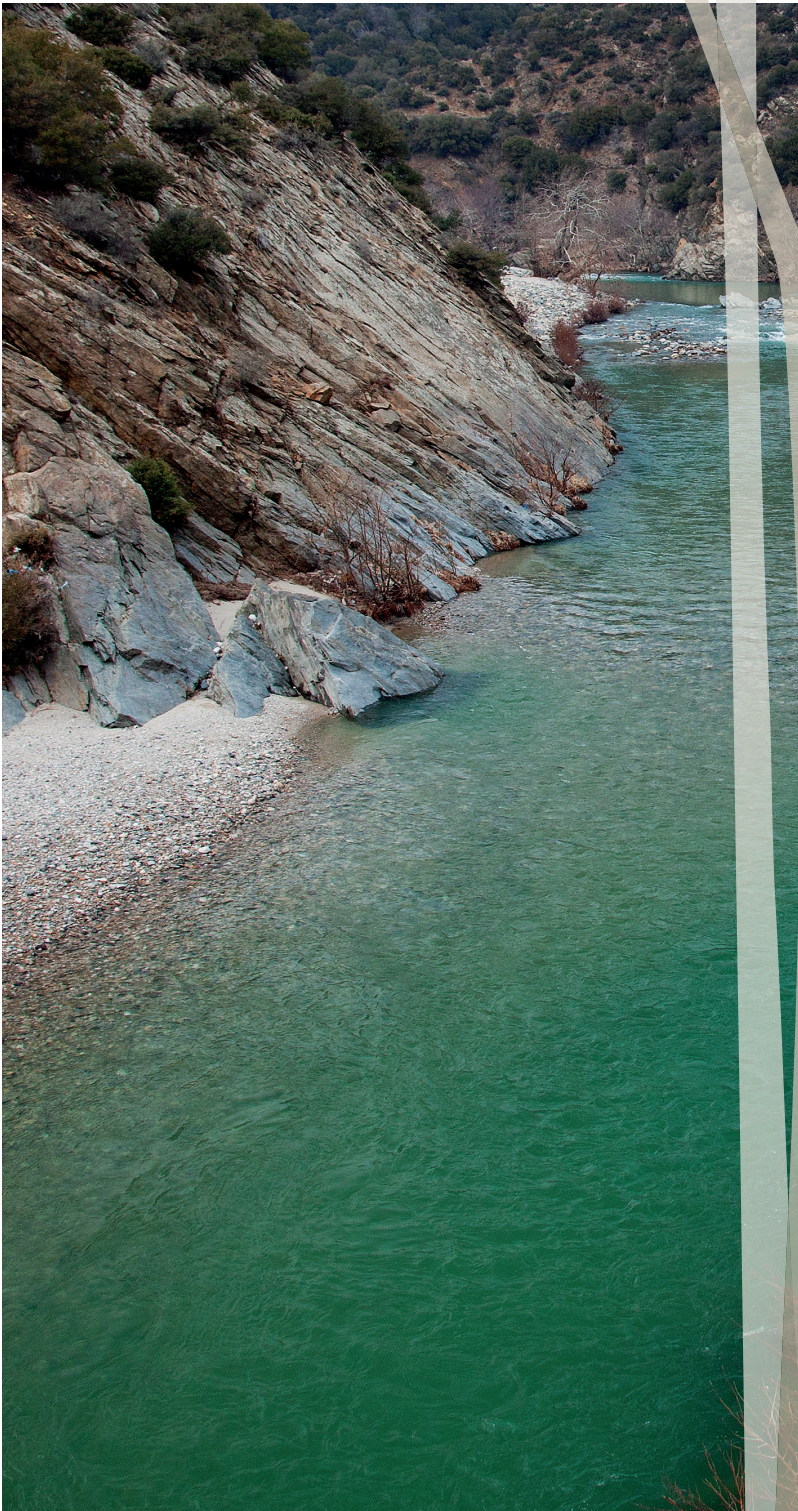
West of Komotini →

Following the Komotini-Iasmos road, about 7 km from Komotini town, look for the remains of Byzantine **Maximianoupolis-Mosynoupolis**. Excavations brought to light sections of the walls of the cemetery and the city's Episcopal Church. The provincial road network to Iasmos will bring you to the foot of **Mount Papikion**, after crossing the settlements of Dymi, Agiasma, Thamna, Asomatoi, Mega Pisto, Sostis and Polyanthos. From Sostis, you can reach and explore the slopes of Mount Papikion, where you will find the remains of monastic complexes, indicative of the flourishing monastic byzantine state that developed in the region.

Of special interest are the now-uninhabited stone villages (old Linos, Geneti, Poa, Kerasia, Folia, Vronti), which were built during the Ottoman period. The area of **Polyanthos** is also crossed by the Komsatos River, which flows into Lake Vistonida. North of the modern bridge, stands the impressive three-arched **stone bridge** that once connected the river banks. The landscape, the lush riparian vegetation and the archaeological remains found on top of the hill, compose an area of particular beauty and multifaceted value.

The privileged, semi-mountainous region of **Iasmos** is equally interesting. Follow the signs northward to reach the organized recreational site and shelter right next to the abandoned Pomac village of **Polyarnos**, facing the “**Thracian Meteora**” that can be reached by following the E6 hiking trail.

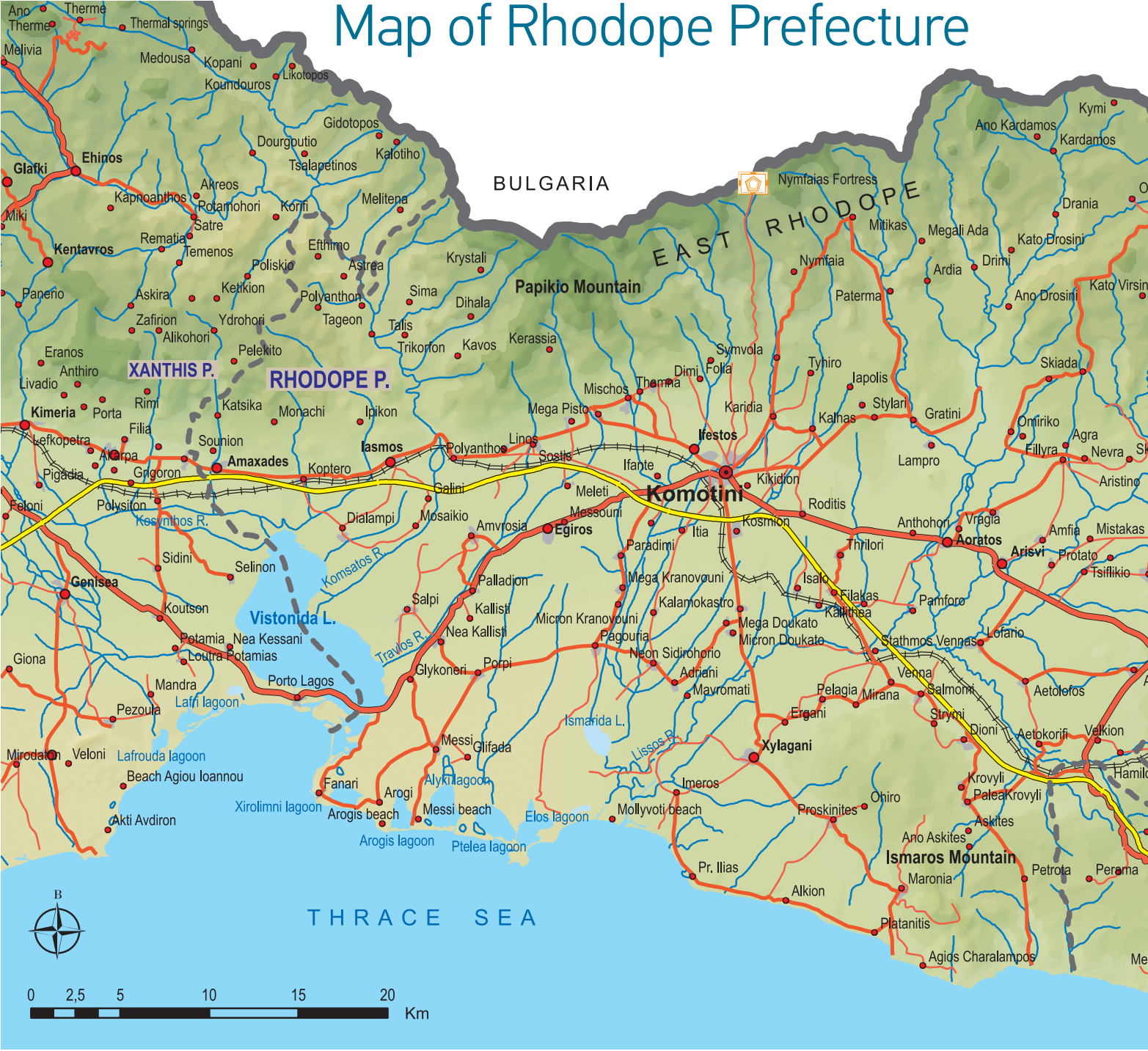


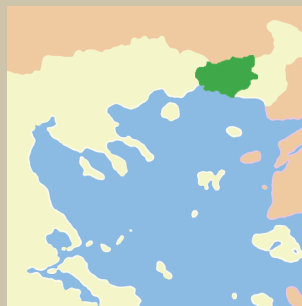
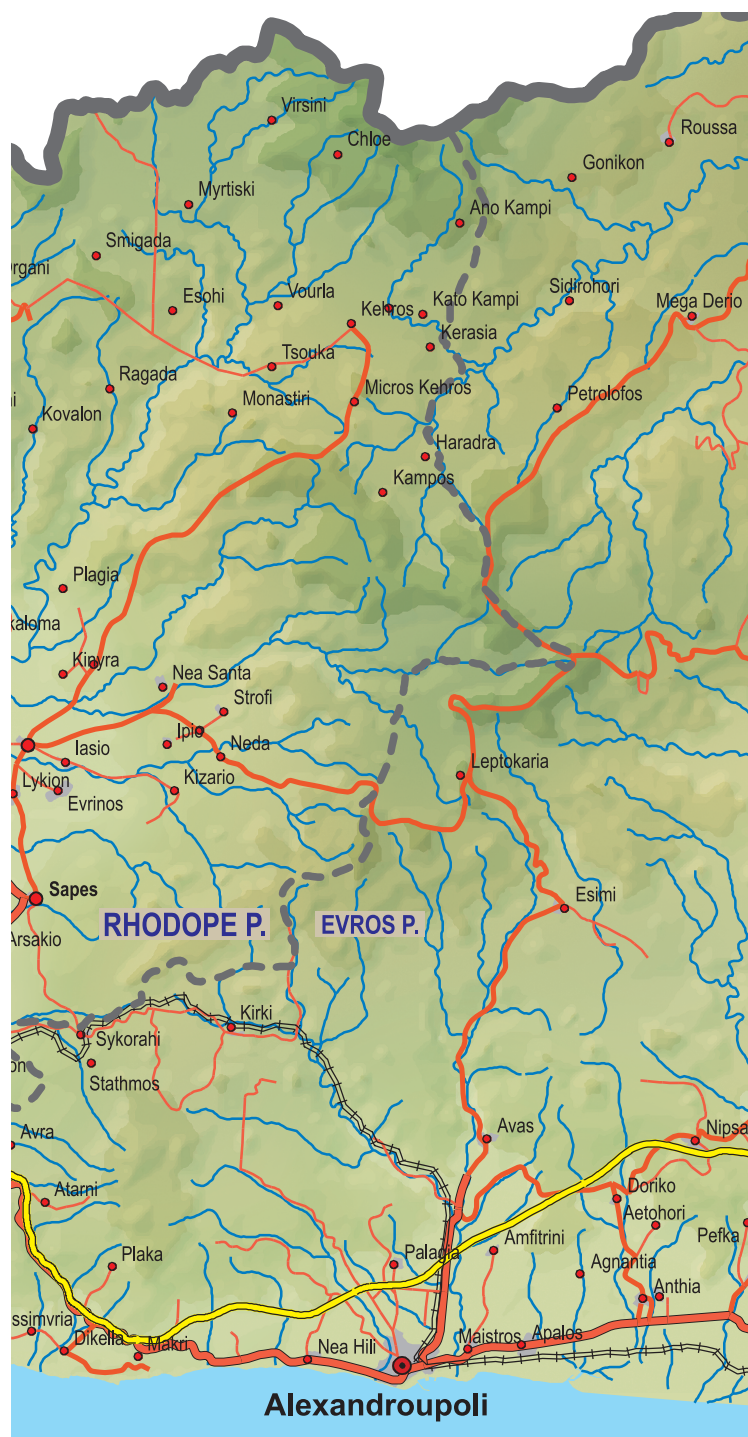


Your last stop will be in the area of **Amaxades** and **Anastasioupolis-Peritheorion**. The town, built in the late 5th and early 6th century AD, was a station on the Via Egnatia and an important port at the head of Lake Vistonida. The road passes through the gate of the eastern fence, which is almost entirely preserved and is found at an impressive height.



Map of Rhodope Prefecture





Legend

- Capitals of Prefectures
- Towns
- Villages

Useful Informations

> Access

KTEL Buses Komotini, 25310 22912

KTEL Buses Thessaloniki, 2310 595419

KTEL Buses Athens, 210 5144905

OSE Railway Komotini, 25310 22650

OSE Railway Thessaloniki, 2310 517517

OSE Railway Athens, 210 3624405-6

Kavala International Airport «Megas Alexandros», 25910 53400

Alexandroupolis International Airport "Democritus", 25510 89322

> Archaeological Sites and Monuments

Cave of the Cyclop Polyphemus (Maroneia)

Ephorate of Palaeoanthropology and Speleology of Northern Greece, 2310 410185

Ancient Maroneia

19th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, 25310 22411

Byzantine Maroneia

15th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, 25310 35870

Anastasioupolis-Peritheorion (Amaksades)

12th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, 2510 224716-228689

Maximianoupolis-Mosynoupolis (Mischos)

15th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, 25310 35870

Macedonian tomb at Symbola

19th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, 25310 22411

Imaret

15th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, 25310 35870

Medieval bridge of the Kompsatos River

15th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, 25310 35870

Mount Papikion

15th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, 25310 35870

> Museums and Information Infrastructures

Archaeological Museum of Komotini

Symeonidi and Vyronos Sts, 25310 21517-22411

Ecclesiastical Museum of the Holy Metropolis of Maroneia and Komotini (Imaret)

8 Xenophontos St., 25310 34177

Folklore Museum of the Komotini Cultural Association (Peidi Mansion)

13 Agios Georgiou St., 25310 25975

Byzantine Museum - Culture House (Papanikolaou Institute)

1 V. Pavlou St., 25310 22112 (prearrangement required)

Basketry Museum of Komotini

Orphanoudakis and Ilektras Sts, 25310 35813, www.romagr.gr

Thracian, Ethnological, Historical and Cultural Museum of Komotini and Thrace (Skouteri Mansion), 10 Kouloglou St., 25310 30313

Thracian Museum of Education

(Agios Georgios churchyard), 25310 36739

Karatheodori Museum

93 Kyriakidis St., 25310 85640-1, www.karatheodori.gr

Papadrielleios Municipal Gallery (Staliou Mansion)

64 Kondyli St., 25310 31022

Natural History Museum of Komotini Municipality (Pandrossos)

25310 31022

Nymfaia Fortress Museum

25310 22691 (upon authorization from the 29th infantry regiment of Komotini)

Folklore Museum of Karydia, 25310 29453

Folklore Museum of Xylaganis, 25330 22388

Folklore Museum of Neo Sidirochori

Rural Heritage Museum of Iasmos, 6972 999268

Information Centre of the Vistonida - Ismarida lakes

Porto Lagos, 25410 96646, www.epamath.gr

> Group... activities

Greek Mountaineering Club of Komotini

25310 29411-30702 www.eoskomotinis.blogspot.com

Cultural Association of Komotini, 25310 25975

Ecological Group of Rhodope, 25310 32061, *www.oikorodopi.gr*

Cultural Movement of Rhodope Prefecture

6979 080237, www.politistikikinisigr

Overall, the Prefecture boasts a large number of cultural associations (Cultural Association of Maroneia Xylagani, Iasmos, Paradimi, Karydia, Friends of Kallithea, Youths of Dialampis, Ambrosia, Salpi, Rom Cultural Association, and Cultural Association of the Municipality of Iasmos etc.).

The active interest of the people for their land is demonstrated by the long list of women's associations and cooperatives, such as the Women's Agricultural Association of Maroneia, the Women's Cultural Association of Komotini «The Old City», the cultural associations of the women of Xylagani, Iasmos, Thrylorio, Karydia, N. Sidirochori, Proskinites, Imeros, Askites, Pamforos, Yfantas, Ambrosia, Palladios, Glykoneri, Nea Andriani etc.



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